

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claims 1 and 2 (cancelled).

Claim 3 (currently amended): An austenitic stainless steel that is less susceptible to cracking during forming, which has a composition comprising approximately 0-0.04 mass % C, approximately 0.1-1.0 mass % Si, approximately 0-5.0 mass % of Mn, approximately 0-0.0060 mass % S, ~~approximately 0-0.003~~ greater than 0 mass % up to 0.003 mass % Al, approximately 5-9 mass % Ni, approximately 15-20 mass % Cr, approximately 0-0.035 mass % N, approximately 1.0-5.0 mass % Cu and the balance being Fe except inevitable impurities, and has non-metallic MnO-SiO₂-Al₂O₃ inclusions, which contains not less than approximately 15 mass % of SiO₂ and not more than approximately 40 mass % of Al₂O₃, dispersed in its matrix.

Claim 4 (withdrawn).

Claim 5 (original): The austenitic stainless steel according to claim 3, further including a boron content up to a max of 0.03 mass %, if the sulfur content is greater than 0.0030 mass %.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The austenitic stainless steel according to claim 3, wherein the composition ~~preferably~~ has a value of $d \leq 0$ and $a > 0$, where

$$d = 1.9 \text{ Ni} + 32\text{C} + 27\text{N} + 0.15 (\text{Mn} + \text{Cu}) - 1.5 \text{ Cr} + 8.5 \text{ and}$$

$$a = \text{Ni} + 0.5 \text{ Cr} + 0.7 (\text{Mn} + \text{Cu}) - 18.$$

Claims 7-10 (withdrawn).

Claim 11 (new): The austenitic stainless steel according to claim 3, containing a Cu content greater than 1 mass %.